UMMUL MOMINEEN

# UMM HABIBA

## BINT ABU SUFYAN

أم حبيبة بِنت أبي سفيان رضئ الله تعالى عنها

SHAIKH MIR ASEDULLAH QUADRI

# UMMUL MOMINEEN UMM HABIBA BINT ABU SUFYAN

## (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا)

**Written By**

**SHAIKH MIR ASEDULLAH QUADRI**

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بِسم الله الرحمنِ الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام
على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

# UMMUL MOMINEEN UMM HABIBAH (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا)

## BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE

Born into the prestigious and powerful clan of Banu Umayyah, Ramlah bint Abu Sufyan—better known in history as Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا)—entered the world amid the highest echelons of Quraishi nobility. Her father, Abu Sufyan ibn Ḥarb, was one of the most influential figures in Makkah, a seasoned statesman, and a commanding leader of the Quraish, renowned for his sharp intellect, political acumen, and, initially, his fierce opposition to the message of Islam.

Growing up in this elite environment, Ramlah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) was afforded every privilege a noblewoman of her time could receive—status, education, and protection. She was surrounded by the power circles of Makkah and was undoubtedly raised to inherit the tribal pride and cultural prestige of Quraishi aristocracy. Yet, it would not be wealth or lineage that would ultimately define her life, but faith—a faith she would embrace with courage and uphold with resilience through isolation, widowhood, and eventual elevation.

At a young age, she married Obaidullah ibn Jahsh, a member of a respected Quraishi family and a cousin of Zaynab bint Jahsh (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا), another future wife of the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). This marriage, however, would take a dramatic turn when the winds of revelation began to blow through Makkah.

When Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) began to preach the oneness of Allah and the message of Islam, Ramlah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) and her husband were among the first to believe. This act placed her in direct contradiction to the values of her household, particularly that of her father, who quickly emerged as one of the most vocal and strategic opponents of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). It is difficult to overstate the gravity of her choice: to declare loyalty to Islam in the house of Abu Sufyan was to risk disownment, humiliation, and potential violence.

The persecution of Muslims in Makkah intensified, and like many early believers, Ramlah and her husband made the fateful decision to migrate to Abyssinia (Habasha)—seeking the protection of a just Christian king, al-Najashi (the Negus). It was in this distant land that Ramlah's commitment to her faith would be tested even further. While she remained firm in Islam, her husband abandoned the religion, converted to Christianity, and later died in disbelief—leaving her alone as a widow in a foreign land, with a young daughter, Ḥabibah, from whom she would derive her famous *kunyah*.

Thus, even before her union with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) had endured a journey of deep personal sacrifice—leaving behind her family, homeland, and security in order to hold fast to her belief in the truth. Her early life, once filled with the privileges of tribal nobility, was now marked by isolation and uncertainty. Yet it was precisely in this struggle that her sincerity was forged and her rank before Allah elevated.

She was not forgotten in her exile. Across the Red Sea, in Madinah, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) would soon send a proposal of marriage—one that would not only rescue her from loneliness but raise her to one of the most honored stations a woman could attain: a Mother of the Believers.

## LIFE BEFORE MARRIAGE TO THE PROPHET (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم)

The life of Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) before her marriage to Prophet Muhammad صلى الله (عليه و آله وسلم) was marked by the extraordinary tension between lineage and conviction. As the daughter of Abu Sufyan, the leading statesman and commander of the Quraish, she grew up surrounded by the fiercest political opposition to Islam. Yet, in a turn of history marked by divine wisdom, she was among the early converts to the very faith her father fought to extinguish.

Her embrace of Islam—alongside her husband Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh—placed her in an especially vulnerable position. Islam, in its earliest Makkan phase, was not just a spiritual choice but a social rupture. By choosing to follow Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), she risked being disowned by her powerful family, cast out of the tribal protections that shielded women, and left at the mercy of a society hostile to the new religion.

The persecution against Muslims in Makkah intensified with each passing year, and the young couple, like many other early believers, made the difficult decision to migrate to Abyssinia

(Habasha)—seeking refuge under the protection of the just Christian ruler al-Najashi. This migration, the first hijrah in Islamic history, was both an act of survival and spiritual conviction. It required abandoning home, wealth, and familial protection for the sake of preserving faith.

In Abyssinia, the Muslim exiles initially found peace. The Negus offered them security and dignity, and Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) built a new life away from Makkah's oppressive reach. But the trials were not yet over. In a devastating turn, her husband Ubaydullah, once a committed Muslim, apostatized—leaving Islam and embracing Christianity. Historical sources like Ibn Sa'd and al-Ṭabari suggest that he began to drink heavily and soon died in that state, leaving Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) widowed, alone, and vulnerable in a foreign land.

This was perhaps the darkest moment of her life. She had given up everything for her faith—her family, homeland, and now her husband. Yet she remained unshaken in her belief. Her endurance in this moment, while isolated and unsupported, testifies to her deep spiritual conviction and resilience. She refused to return to idolatry or abandon the community of believers, even as she raised her daughter Ḥabibah in solitude.

It was during this period of solitude and quiet struggle that a message from across the sea reached the Christian court of the Negus. Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), aware of her faith and tribulation, sent a marriage proposal to Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا). He entrusted this delicate and honorable task to his Abyssinian envoy Amr ibn Umayyah al-Ḍamri, and the king al-Najashi, himself presided over the ceremony.

The proposal was not simply one of compassion, it was a divine gesture of restoration. The woman who had stood firm while alone in exile would now be brought into the highest spiritual household on earth: that of the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). The Negus performed the marriage, gifted her four hundred gold dinars as mahr (dowry) on behalf of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), and hosted a gathering for the Muslims in Abyssinia in celebration.

Her union with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) occurred while he was in Madinah and she was still in Abyssinia, but it marked the end of her isolation. She was now no longer merely a widow in exile—she was Ummul Momineen, the Mother of the Believers, an embodiment of patience, faith, and elevation after hardship.

This marriage was significant for many reasons. Spiritually, it was a reward for Umm Ḥabibah's (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) unwavering faith under hardship. Socially, it demonstrated the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) concern for the welfare of his followers—especially the vulnerable among them. Politically, it built a bridge between the Muslim community and the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia, and later, between the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) and the powerful Quraishi clan of Banu Umayyah. Though her father, Abu Sufyan, was still among the Prophet's fiercest enemies, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) married his daughter, not out of strategy, but as an act of divine timing and personal generosity.

Soon after the marriage, Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) was escorted from Abyssinia to Madinah, likely accompanied by a group of returning Muslim emigrants. When she arrived in

Madinah, she joined the household of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) and was welcomed with the dignity befitting a Mother of the Believers.

One of the most famous and telling moments in her marriage occurred when her father, Abu Sufyan, visited Madinah during the period of Hudaybiyyah. As a non-Muslim seeking to negotiate terms with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), he entered her home. Upon seeing him approach the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) bedding, Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) quickly folded it up, refusing to let her father—a polytheist at the time—sit on the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) place of rest. Her father, startled, asked, "Am I better than this bed, or is it better than me?" She replied calmly but firmly: "This is the bedding of the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), and you are a polytheist and impure. You may not sit on it." It was a moment that captured her fierce loyalty to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) and her unapologetic devotion to Islam—despite her love for her father.

Her marriage to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) was not only a reward for her patience and faith but also a sign of reconciliation to come. Years later, her father and her entire family would become Muslim.

Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) was known for her gentle composure, modesty, and steadfastness. She lived among the other wives of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) in harmony, rarely involved in the occasional tensions that arose. Her focus remained on worship, service, and upholding the sanctity of her household. She was not given to public discourse or disputation; rather, her strength lay in her private loyalty and inner discipline.

She narrated several authentic hadith, though her role was more private and reflective than public and prolific. In Sahih Muslim, she narrated hadith in which the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said: *"Whoever performs twelve rakʿahs during the day and night, a house will be built for him in Paradise…"* This narration stands among the many spiritual insights she preserved for the Ummah, offering reward and encouragement rooted in personal devotion.

Her devotion was not limited to prayer and fasting alone. She is reported to have maintained strong relationships with her daughter Ḥabibah, and she treated the Companions and members of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) family with respect and affection.

Her love for the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) was evident until his final days. She mourned his loss with deep sorrow but carried forward the role of Mother of the Believers with grace and constancy. She did not remarry after his death, as was divinely mandated for the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) wives, and she lived the rest of her life as a guardian of his legacy, committed to remembrance, prayer, and community respect.

# LIFE AFTER THE PROPHET (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم)

The passing of the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) marked a turning point in the lives of all his Companions—none more so than the Mothers of the Believers, whose roles shifted from active partnership in the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) household to the solemn responsibility of preserving his legacy. Among them, Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) continued to embody the quiet dignity, strength of faith, and refined character that had marked her years of companionship with the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم).

Following the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) death in 11 AH, Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) remained in Madinah, where she lived a life of devotion, reflection, and humility. She observed the rules of seclusion for the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) widows and maintained a dignified presence, offering guidance and memory to the early Muslim community when sought. She did not involve herself in political disputes or public affairs, but her quiet influence and noble lineage ensured she remained a respected matron within the Ummah.

As a woman of Banu Umayyah clan and the daughter of Abu Sufyan, her position carried both religious and political weight. Yet, despite her family's growing power—especially after her brother Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan (رضي الله تعالى عنه) took over the reign, Umm Ḥabibah ( رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) never used her influence for worldly ambition. Her life was one of religious commitment and restraint, rooted in her understanding of the prophetic model.

One of the most poignant moments of her later life was her interaction with her brother Muawiyah during his rule. In a narration recorded by Ibn Sa'd, she once addressed him in a private meeting and reminded him of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) example and the responsibility of leadership, not as a sister, but as a Mother of the Believers. Her counsel reflected wisdom and moral clarity, and even Muawiyah, known for his political shrewdness, deferred to her spiritual authority with humility.

She continued to narrate hadith, preserve memories of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), and engage in acts of charity. Despite being the daughter of one of Islam's fiercest former enemies and the sister of the Umayyad ruler, she never allowed tribal pride to overshadow her spiritual identity as the wife of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم).

Umm Ḥabibah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) passed away around the year 44 AH (664 CE) during the rule of her brother, Muawiyah. Her death marked the close of a life that had journeyed from the palaces of Makkah to the exile of Abyssinia, from the isolation of widowhood to the honor of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) household. She was buried in Jannat al-Baqi, alongside other noble wives of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم).